1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5) 1938 Pukapukans

stance. When the gods caused man to descend from the god Mataliki, they were afraid to give his soul full awareness, because once it left the body enjoying full awareness, it would never come back, and the body would thus be superfluous. The gods therefore ensured that the soul would see the world in a misty fashion only, that it would be afraid of daylight and thus would have to see the world always under cover of darkness. The soul hurries home at dawn. Dreams are often indistinct and easily forgotten because the soul is not clearly aware of the adventures it has when it wanders about in the night. Medicine men (*tangata wotu*) who had the power of seeing souls in the dark often killed them on the theory that they were up to some mischief, causing sickness. Hence the soul always tried to avoid the medicine man in its nightly perambulations.

After death of the material body for whatever reason, the soul is finally released for all time from the body. It journeys to the Underworld, where it takes up permanent residence and enjoys the full pleasure and awareness denied to it in the upper world. There is no question of reincarnation, because the soul will not readily resume the bondage of the body after tasting the delights of full awareness in the Underworld. The gods may intervene to return the soul to the body after a short sojourn in the Underworld, usually at the supplication of those mourners left on earth, never at the supplication of the soul itself.

The Cosmos

The Pukapukan idea of the cosmos, complementing the ideology of the soul, is that the cosmos consists of three major levels, indefinitely extensive flat surfaces. The level of this world of humans comprises *te papa wenua* and *te papa moana*, the level of land and of sea. Above is *te papa langi*, the level of the sky. The sky meets land or sea at the horizon, which is thought of as the side of the sky, *te tawa o te langi*. The sky therefore limits the indefinite expansion of the earthly levels. Below the level of this world is the Po, the Underworld, itself made up of three further indefinitely extensive levels, *te kapi lunga*, *te kapi lalo*, and *te po likuliku*. No limit to these levels is known.

The Underworld

Pukapukan knowledge of the Underworld (fig. 54) is derived from the visit made by Wotoa and Te Yoa, two seers, who figure also as the heroes who rid Pukapuka of the god-ogre, Te Atua Pule. Neither of these brothers comes into the genealogies. The account they brought back was supplemented by dream visits of other seers to the Underworld at later dates, and by dreams of laymen. The account of the visit of Wotoa and Te Yoa is as follows:

1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5) 1938 Pukapukans

not hereditary. Each practitioner started afresh. Induction into the ranks came through dream experience, believed to be given the man by the god of his lineage. The dream (*miti*) was either of a medical nature, or in some other way made plain that the dreamer was chosen by his god to cure sickness. In some modern dreams recounted in Pukapuka, the lineage gods as causative agents were succeeded by European doctors of medicine. An example of this is the following dream recounted by a native doctor:

> One night I had a dream in which I was taken to a *uale maki* (hospital). It was in Tahiti, I think, though my body was in Pukapuka. I saw two *tunuaga*[1] *maki* (doctors) in the room. One man, who was the chief, was standing beside a bed, the other man was leaning over someone lying on the bed. The one leaning over the bed straightened up as I came into the room, came close to me and said, "Come with me, e tolcu mouli (O pupil of my eye)." Then we three approached the bed. The chief doctor said to me, "I will show you how to treat sickness. I will show you all the parts of the body, so you will know what sickness is." Then the doctors showed me the two methods of *lomilomi* physical therapy. They cut open the body and pointed out to me the various organs, told me of the sickness affecting each part, how this sickness could be diagnosed, and how treated. These doctors were white men. After they showed me everything, they told me to go back to Pukapuka, but to dream of them any time I wanted assistance. I woke up in a normal condition, wondering why I should have been selected for this dream.

This informant had several dreams in which he has both procured status from, and asked information of, white doctors when called to treat sicknesses he could not understand. He did not use any technique to have these dreams. The old pattern was evident in the feeling of the initial dream that further contact with the source of inspiration could be obtained when meeting with unfamiliar types of sickness, though the medicine man of old consulted his lineage gods in every case of sickness brought to him, whether familiar or not.

For his services, the medicine man was paid whatever the patient thought fit. A small food gift was usually sufficient. He received ample recompense for his trouble in the social prestige that accrued to him as a prominent individual of the community.

CAUSATION AND TREATMENT

For treatment in former days, the sick person sent for or more frequently went to the house of the medicine man, who questioned the patient about the sickness, the location and nature of pain. After the first diagnosis the medicine man consulted the gods of the lineage or the special gods of medicine by whom the sickness might be cured. Communication with the gods was held in the house of the medicine man and in the presence of the patient, or in the god house of the medicine man if he were at the same time a practicing priest. The technique of communication was by the pigeon-

[1] The Pukapukan word *tunuaga*, cognate of Maori *tohunga* (expert), is now applied to white medical specialists. It was formerly not used in reference to priests, seers, or medicine men but was an ordinary adjective denoting skilled, expert, applied to any other art or craft.

1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5) 1938 Pukapukans

sounding (*lupe*) ritual, or by the continuous chanting of songs. When he felt the god within him, the medicine man in his trance state told the god of the sickness; in answer, the god told him the cause and the treatment to be followed. The medicine man then took steps to treat the sickness.

A typical case of sickness caused by the direct intervention of a god was given by Pau:

> A man, Y, injures me in some way or other, whether physically or mentally as by ridicule. Wishing to avenge myself, I consult a god of my lineage. If the injury is trifling and the desired revenge slight, I speak to the god anywhere; if the injury is serious, I ask a priest to intercede for me, or if I am a priest, I intercede for myself. According as he views the matter, the god will listen to my request and send or not send sickness. If the god decides to make Y sick, he himself or one of his attendant spirits obtains a disease object, which he causes to be inserted in the body of Y, either through the mouth or the anus. The introduction of this foreign body causes sickness by twisting up, gnawing at, or sticking into, vital organs. Y now falls sick, and calls into consultation a medicine man, who, after a digital exploration of the parts affected, diagnoses the trouble. The medicine man consults the god of his lineage, and procures instructions for removing the foreign body from the patient. With his fingers he squeezes the patient's body and draws out the foreign object. He keeps his hand closed, lest the object try to escape back into the body, but the patient's relatives gather round and feel the hand of the medicine man so as to be assured that the object is really inside it. Then he crushes the disease object and throws it into the fire, so killing the spirit that entered into the object within the patient. Y should now get well.
>
> Y may or may not know the reason for his sickness, but informant was positive that Y would not attempt counter revenge without great provocation. The best technique for Y to employ is to pray to his god for extra protection in future. If Y was made sick on subsequent occasions or if he died from sickness, then provocation would be sufficient for his relatives to pray for the punishment of the offender.

The cultural theory was that a man should not dare to intercede with his god to revenge a sickness without real provocation. One who did so on a slight pretext was termed *tangata lepu atua* (one who violated the sanctity of the god). The god was thought to become angry when called to attend to matters beneath his dignity; he might well become so angry as to send sickness to the *tangata lepu atua* instead of the desired victim.

A malicious spirit (*aitu*) who inflicted disease on a living person to avenge injury received during life, usually to revenge himself on relatives who had neglected him in his old age, stolen his nuts, given him inadequate food, ill treated him, or neglected to bury with him his valuable fishhooks or ornaments, acted in the following way:

> The spirit carried a disease object to the body of a relative or enemy, so causing the illness of which he had himself died—a diagnostic point of importance for the medicine man. When the patient consulted the medicine man he inquired whether anyone had recently died of the same disease from which the patient suffered. If so, there was strong presumption that the deceased's spirit was causing the trouble.

The method of treatment was the one already described, with the following variations:

1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5) 1938 Pukapukan

755 On being consulted, the god searched for the presumed sickness-causing spirit, which he showed to the medicine man, asking whether the sickness from which the spirit suffered was the same as that of the patient. Receiving an affirmative answer, the god held the spirit fast while the medicine man beat it to death. The communication over, the medicine man explained matters to the patient and withdrew the foreign thing from his body. The patient recovered with the knowledge that he would never again be troubled by that spirit.

755 The seer Levi had a great reputation as a killer of spirits. The story of Yawani illustrates his powers:

775 Yawani was a man from Tongareva who lived in Pukapuka at the time of the early missionaries. When a female friend of his wife died, Yawani sought permission from
773 the pastor to bury her in Tongarevan fashion, in a boxlike stone grave above ground instead of underground in the Pukapukan manner. The pastor refused permission and insulted Yawani. Some days later Yawani went to Motu Ko to cut down a tree for a canoe. The branch he was cutting broke suddenly; a sharp point entered his body and disemboweled him. He died of his injuries. His soul began to wander over the island trying to cause sickness.

Once when the people were sailing across the lagoon to Motu Ko, they saw a ripple of water (*pipi te ŋao*) going in front of the canoe. Levi, who was on one of the canoes, said that he could see in the ripple the soul of Yawani. Soon after this the pastor's wife became sick. The pastor was convinced that it was the spirit of Yawani causing the sickness. Prayer was of no avail, so the people asked Levi to deal with the *aitu*. Some time later Levi was looking over the lagoon when he recognized the soul of Yawani moving along the reef from Kotawa to Yato. Levi performed the pigeon (*lupe*) ritual and called on his gods to help him wrestle with the spirit. By the time it had reached the causeway, Levi's gods had rallied to his aid. The gods surrounded the *aitu* so it could not escape; Levi rushed at it with a stick and struck it several times. Some blood fell on the ground (and teeth and a head as well, say some!), and this was taken as a token that Levi had killed the spirit. Further proof was that the pastor's wife got well and the soul was never seen again.

773 The third type of disease-causing spirit, spirits from a foreign land (*aitu*
776 *tutukoa*, mischief-making spirits), specialized in causing epidemic diseases. They were not spirits of Pukapukan dead, but spirits of dead people in foreign lands or of foreign gods. Some say that these spirits came from islands to the east or west of Pukapuka and lit on the island out of pure mischief. Others believe they came with a canoe load of visitors or drift voyagers, and then attacked the Pukapukans, for the visitors were immune to their own
755 gods. At any rate this was a point to be considered by the seer in diagnosing apparently epidemic diseases. All the seers consulted their gods on the sacred enclosures to learn whether the diagnosis of *aitu tutukoa* was correct. If the diagnosis was confirmed, one seer was chosen to deal with the spirits.

The seer communicated again with his god, who then accompanied him on a visit round Pukapuka. The god had with him his weapons: the lightning, the sun, the stars, the water. When the two came across a spirit, the god poured water about it so that it could not escape without being drowned, then blinded it with lightning, starlight, and sunlight. While the *aitu tutukoa* was thus helpless, the seer beat it with a stick until it was dead. The seer could then inform the people that the matter was over. If the disease did not immediately disappear, then other *aitu tutukoa* must be at large and the cure was continued until all were put out of the way.

1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5) 1938 Pukapukans

In case of severe illness where neither treatment nor consultation with the gods seemed to help, the medicine man might recommend holding a general confessional over the sick person. He might also recommend in a case of difficult childbirth that the parturient mother confess. (See p. 273.) The object of the general confessional was to bring to light concealed sins among the patient's relatives, sins which might be retarding recovery, or for which the sick person might be suffering. The confessional survives today. We were present at one held over a sick child, an only son, aged ten months, in a family of girls:

In the evening at about seven o'clock all the relatives, both close and distant, gathered in the small house of the parents. Outside were grouped all the people of the village, together with many people from the other two villages. Many brought mats with them, upon which they lay; others lay on the bare ground. All age groups were represented, as well as both sexes. The mother sat in the middle of the group inside the house, with the closer relatives grouped around her. She held the sick child on her lap, but did not participate in the "confession". Above her head a lamp burned, and by the lamp hung the old sennit malo that the child would receive should it live to maturity.

The "confession", conducted by the principal males present, consisted in reiterated pleas and challenges directed by each man in turn to the other men and to the mother, urging them to confess what they had of evil in their hearts; suggesting that the child was sick because relatives had bad hearts (*ngakau kino*) and he could only get well when, and if, all the evil was confessed away from their hearts. No one actually confessed his sins aloud before the assembled community, but presumably each did so in the secret recesses of his heart. When one man stopped his urgings, another took up the plaint, and the arguments were bandied about the group without cessation. The crowd outside the house just listened, for the most part silently; some carried on conversations in low voices, and the inevitable flirting went on between the young men and women on the outskirts of the group. The "confession" was kept up all night, though the spectators drifted away at a late hour, leaving only the relatives to carry on.

All was in vain, however. The baby died early the following morning; and the death was attributed in part to the fact that some among the relatives had not cleared their hearts as fully as was desirable.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Though dependent upon the suggestions of the god for confirmation of diagnosis and ideas of treatment, the Pukapukan medical practitioner had, and still has, at his command a number of effective empirical techniques. My information is from Pau, today the foremost medicine man in Pukapuka. His treatments in general seem to follow native patterns, but he has probably borrowed (how much it is hard to tell) some of his rationalizations and practices from European knowledge. The practice of *lomilomi* (deep pressure) is the outstanding method of physical therapy:

Pau's theory is that pressure on a vein (*uaua*) close to the seat of pain, in *lomilomi*, cuts off the blood vessels from the source of irritation, and thus prevents bad blood from flowing along the vein to the affected part. Formerly it was believed also to cut off the disease object from the seat of pain so that it could be removed.

The two movements of *lomilomi* are: *yoka* (deep pressure) or *uaua* (gentle pressure), pressing with one finger on the affected vein; and *taukatele* (to travel), placing

1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5) 1938 Pukapukans

the thumb on the vein and then with deep pressure, moving it slowly along the vein outward. Both movements are applied in all types of sickness, on all parts of the body, for every type of pain. Even in inflammation of the breast in a nursing mother, *lomilomi* is applied to relieve congestion or allay pain. Only the inexperienced person indulges in general rubbing movements over the whole body and on places remote from the source of pain. Massage, in the conventional sense, is never used by the expert medicine man, who concentrates on deep pressure over the seat of pain. There is no use of chanting either to assist the rhythm of pressure or magically to increase the efficacy of the technique.

Deep pressure and thumb movement are further applied for the relief of pain as follows:

Strains and sprains. The limb is explored with the fingers to determine the part of greatest swelling; deep pressure is then applied to this spot while the patient moves the limb at frequent intervals.

Pain in the middle of the forearm. Deep pressure is applied to the blood vessel in the upper arm; then the thumb is pressed along the main artery in the forearm, from the proximal to the distal portion of the limb, thus rubbing the sickness to the fingers, and ultimately from the fingers into the air. An added treatment is the application of a suitable medicine to the wrist and then pressing toward the wrist in such a way that the sickness is conveyed to the wrist and there absorbed by the medicinal application.

Short breath (*ao potopoto*). Shortness of breath resulting from overwork is diagnosed as due to violent pounding of the heart. Deep pressure is applied to the right top and left top of the abdominal cavity. This is believed to relieve breath tension, but no effect on the blood flow is recognized.

Headache (*tinga te ulu*). Deep pressure is applied to the nape of the neck (the effect being presumably to paralyze the nerve centers in this part of the body).

Constipation (*tutai pukapuka*) and diarrhea (*tatapi*). Deep pressure is applied to the colon (in the one case to relieve strangulation, in the other to assist the process of adjustment).

Stomach pain (*tinga te manava*) including mild appendicitis. Deep pressure is applied to the part of the abdomen affected.

Filarial swellings (*wahi hinohino*). For swellings of the foreleg, for example, deep pressure is applied to the thigh and is followed by thumb *wakatele*.

Formerly, a medicine man might perform the pigeon-sounding ritual (*lupa*) before beginning the *lomilomi* and at frequent intervals during the course of the treatment, with the idea of introducing the power of the god into his fingers and of retaining it during the treatment. This method was not common; its use depended on the personal choice of the medicine man and on the severity of the sickness. When he did this, bystanders would say: "Ka yopukia e te atua i te lima" (The god will seize the hand).

Broken and dislocated bones are treated by empirical means, supported formerly by communication with the god if complications set in. A fractured bone is *iwi wati*; to set a fracture is *wakatou*. The technique was illustrated by Pau only for a broken forearm, a dislocated elbow, and a dislocated jaw, though undoubtedly he has a reasonably good technique for dealing with every type of limb dislocation or breakage:

The medicine man grasps the broken limb with his two hands, the two thumbs on opposite sides of the upper part of the limb, the fingers of both hands holding the limb